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ARGENTINA PROJECT (S200000044)

U.S. DEPT. OF STATE, A/RPS/IPS

Margaret P. Grafeld, Director

☒ Release ☐ Excise ☐ Deny

Exemption(s): _____

Declassify: ☐ In Part ☐ In Full

☐ Classify as _____ ☐ Extend as _____ ☐ Downgrade to _____

Date _____ Declassify on _____ Reason ☒

October 12, 1976

Dear Senator Stevenson:

Thank you for your letter of September 21, concerning Argentine prison conditions as described to Amnesty International, and the problem of political refugees.

The Department of State cannot confirm the details contained in Amnesty International's "Testimonies on Prisons, Torture and Detention in Argentina." There is no question, however, that many prisoners suspected of subversion are treated harshly and held in overcrowded conditions. There are often charges of torture. It is also common to learn of individuals taken from their homes in the middle of the night, sometimes by the security forces, sometimes by terrorists.

Argentine political violence has produced an alarming toll. In the three years of Peronista rule, prior to the March 24 military coup, there were, perhaps, 2,000 deaths. Since then, there have been over 750 killings. On the one hand, the government's security forces have taken very strong measures in their fight against leftist guerrillas and their suspected allies. On the other, guerrilla groups have murdered policemen and military personnel, sometimes at random, and killed businessmen and diplomats, maiming many of them and their families with bombs. It is a tragic situation.

With respect to political exiles, the UN High Commissioner for Refugees has appealed to us and to

The Honorable

Adlai E. Stevenson III,

United States Senate.